Does Cultural Orientation Moderate the Effect of Collective Threat on Collective Self-Esteem?

Research Thesis

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Abstract

Collective self-esteem (CSE) represents individuals' evaluation of their group identities. Yet, people can encounter *collective threats* – negative actions of ingroup members that confirm a negative stereotype - that threaten their group's image. The present research examines how the effect of collective threat on CSE is moderated by an individual's cultural background, specifically whether they hold an individualistic or collectivist orientation. In one study, White and Asian participants were randomly assigned to consider either a threatening or non-threatening scenario that manipulated whether a racial ingroup member confirmed a negative stereotype about participants' racial group. Before and after the scenario, participants completed measures of CSE, trait self-esteem, and positive and negative affect. I hypothesized that collective threat would decrease public CSE among Asian participants, whereas experiencing a collective threat would decrease importance to identity CSE among White participants. The results did not support these hypotheses; no significant interaction emerged between collective threat and participant race on the dependent measures. The results were not further moderated by participants' cultural orientation (i.e., individualism or collectivism) or need to belong. The findings are discussed in terms of collective self-esteem theory and evaluate the effectiveness of the collective threat manipulation.

Introduction

Self-Concept and Self-Esteem

People want to feel good about themselves and their social groups. According to Blascovich and Tomaka (1991), self-esteem is "the extent to which one prizes, values, approves, or likes oneself" (p. 115). Self-esteem is an essential motive in social life - people are motivated to sustain and boost their positive self-image and to protect their self-esteem (Taylor & Brown, 1998; Greenwald, 1980). For example, people with low self-esteem usually focus on avoiding losses and protecting the self, whereas people higher in self-esteem engage in self-enhancement and self-serving biases to preserve their self-worth (Bosson, Brown, Zeigler-Hill & Swann, 2003; Crocker, Thompson, McGraw, & Ingerman, 1987). In short, people are motivated to create and defend a positive image of their self-concept.

Collective Self Esteem

According to social identity theory, group memberships are also a critical part of an individual's self-concept (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Social identity theory predicts that, beyond having positive or negative evaluations of the self, people also vary in how positively they feel toward their social groups. Collective self-esteem (CSE) captures individuals' attitudes toward their group identity and the perceived relational value of their social groups, such as their racial or gender identity (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). The CSE scale helps construct a better understanding of one's identity and self-concept since personal and collective aspects are both indispensable to one's identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

In their seminal work, Luhtanen and Crocker (1992) constructed a 16-item scale of CSE. This measure captures individual differences in CSE and consists of four separate components. *Membership CSE* captures the extent to which an individual perceives themselves as a good or

worthy member of their group (e.g., "Am I worthy as a group member?"). *Public CSE* represents how an individual believes other people evaluate their social group (e.g., “Do other people value my group?”). *Private CSE* represents an individual’s own attitudes toward their social group (e.g., “I feel good about the social group I belong to"). *Importance to identity CSE* measures whether individuals regard their group membership as essential to their overall self-concept. These four components of CSE comprise an individual’s evaluation of their social group. In summary, the self-esteem literature suggests that people are both motivated to feel good about themselves and their social groups. However, people often encounter information or events that can pose a threat to these desired images.

Collective Threat

A collective threat is when an ingroup member's behavior strengthens a negative stereotype about one’s group (Cohen & Garcia, 2005). Previous research demonstrates that, when individuals witness negative behaviors from fellow ingroup members, this can undermine academic performance and increase self-stereotyping, stereotype activation, and physical distancing from that ingroup member (Cohen & Garcia, 2005).

People higher in CSE are motivated to enhance the positive attributes of their ingroup and to derogate outgroup members (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1992). For example, people who strongly identify with their national identity experience decreases in CSE following a threat to their national identity. In turn, these perceptions of threat lead to increased derogation of outgroup members (Branscombe & Wann, 1994). Thus, collective threats can pose a potential threat to the value and worth of one's social groups. However, it is unclear how different groups respond to collective threats. In the present work, I explore how an individual’s cultural orientation moderates the impact of a collective threat on different components of CSE.

Collectivism and Individualism

Individuals' cultural backgrounds may affect how they perceive and respond to collective threats. Previous research has proposed two dominant cultural orientations – collectivism and individualism (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 2018). The critical element of individualism is that individuals are autonomous, which means that they care for themselves and close family, pursue self-fulfillment, and consider personal achievement as important to their identity (Hofstede, 1980; Oyserman, Coon & Kemmelmeier, 2002). In other words, individualism emphasizes a person's motivation to establish independence from others and to fulfill their personal goals. Non-Hispanic White Americans and Europeans – typically individuals from a western cultural upbringing - tend to exhibit behaviors and cognitions more consistent with individualism (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002).

Collectivism, in contrast, stands for the idea that individuals are bound to one another and mutually obligated to act in the well-being of others and society as a whole (Oyserman et al., 2002). People in collectivistic societies share common fates, goals, and values (Schwartz, 1990). In collectivist cultures, individuals see themselves as interconnected to others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Also, people who hold a collectivist orientation exhibit concerns for anticipating the effect of one's behavior on the group, sharing both material and nonmaterial resources, willingness to accept others' opinions, concerns of losing face and self-presentation in front of ingroup members, believing in a correlation of one's outcomes with others', and belief of involvement in other's life (Hui & Triandis, 1986). For example, Korean, Chinese, and Japanese individuals tend to exhibit behaviors and cognitions more consistent with collectivism.

The Role of Cultural Orientation in Responses to Collective Threat

Individuals' cultural orientation may affect how they respond to collective threats toward their racial group. Notably, individuals' self-construals and cultural orientation may differentially shape how they respond to a collective threat by affecting different components of CSE. Interdependent construal suggests that one's representation of self-related thought and knowledge is interconnected with others. Furthermore, people with interdependent self-construals are vigilant to others' reactions. For people with interdependent self-concepts, self-serving motives often give way to other-serving motives in social contexts (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). For example, people in China react and behave according to social norms and others' expectations rather than their personal dispositions (Yang, 1981).

On the contrary, independent construal stands for one's belief in the self's distinct and unique aspects**.** For people with independent self-construals, one's behaviors are motivated more by one's own thoughts, emotions, and actions instead of others' reactions and feelings. Often, people with independent self-construals reflect on their internal attributes of the self when responding to their social environment (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). According to previous research, people with independent self-construals should be spurred to do self-actualizing actions like self-aggrandization and pursuing academic achievement. On the other hand, those with interdependent views tend to be motivated to consolidate or build up one's relatedness to others (Markus & Wurf, 1987).

While independent and interdependent self-construals may shape behavior to a certain degree, different cultural values may also shape how Eastern and Asian individuals respond to collective threats against their racial group. Asian cultural values contain "collectivism, conformity to norms, deference to authority figures, emotional restraint, filial piety, hierarchical family structure, humility, and maintenance of interpersonal harmony" (Kim & Omizo, 2005, p.

412). In contrast, Western and American individuals endorse values of individualism, competition, directness, autonomy, and future orientation (Casas & Mann, 1996).

According to research, congruence between Asian and European American values is positively correlated with membership and private collective self-esteem; adherence to Asian cultural values results in importance to identity (Kim & Omizo, 2005). People who are highly identified with their national identity behave more align with their group norm. High identifiers in individualistic culture are more individualist than low ones, while in a collectivistic culture, high identifiers are more prone to act according to collectivistic doctrine (Jetten, Postmes & McAuliffe, 2002).

In sum, an individual's cultural background shapes their cognition, motivation, and behavior. Individuals from western cultures tend to endorse an individualistic mindset, possess an independent self-construal, and focus on prioritizing and satisfying one's own goals. In contrast, individuals from eastern cultures tend to endorse a collectivist mindset, possess an interdependent self-construal, and focus on maintaining a sense of harmony and social connection with others. In this study, I propose that these two cultural orientations may differentially shape how individuals respond to a collective threat against their racial group.

Present Research

The present study examines how cultural orientation moderates the effect of collective threat on collective self-esteem. In other words, I test how collective self-esteem changes in response to encountering negative information about one's racial group, and how this varies as a function of individuals' cultural background. Previous research examines individual differences in collective self-esteem as a function of individuals' race and ethnicity (e.g., Crocker et al., 1994; Kong, 2016). However, the present research is the first to investigate how different racial

groups respond to collective threats and how collective threats shape different components of one's collective self-esteem.

I predict that, after witnessing a collective threat against their racial group, White American participants will be more likely to decrease the salience of "importance to identity" CSE compared to Asian participants. Since White individuals tend to hold a more independent self-construal and tend to endorse individualistic values, they may be less motivated to protect or defend their racial group in the face of a collective threat. In contrast, Asian individuals tend to strongly associate the self with their racial and cultural identity. Therefore, Asian individuals may be less willing to detach from their racial group in response to a collective threat given the importance of their identity to their self-concept. Thus, I predict that White participants who encounter a collective threat (vs. not) will show a decrease in importance to identity CSE.

In contrast, I predict that a collective threat will be more likely to decrease public collective self-esteem among South and East Asian participants. Given Asian individuals' interdependent self-construals and relatively higher collectivist beliefs, it may be harder for them to detach from their racial group. Indeed, public CSE is correlated with greater self-esteem among Asian individuals (Crocker et al., 1994). Instead, for South and East Asian individuals, a collective threat may pose a more significant threat to their group's image in others' eyes relative to White individuals. Thus, I predict that Asian participants who encounter a collective threat (vs. not) will show a decrease in public CSE.

Methods

Participants and Data Quality

Participants were 517 undergraduates at Ohio State University who participated in exchange for partial course credit. Participants were eligible for the study if their university

records identified them as either non-Hispanic White or Asian. Participants received a study link through an online portal and participated remotely at a computer of their choice. Data collection ran from September 9th, 2020, through November 20th, 2020. The study was approved by an Institutional Review Board, and all participants gave their consent at the start of the study.

My analyses consisted of 517 participants who self-reported their gender (38.1% male, 61.7% female, 0.2% another identity), race (82% non-Hispanic White, 11.6% East Asian, 6.4% South Asian), and age (M = 18.82, SD = 1.65). Using G*Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009), a sensitivity power analysis revealed that my study could detect a significant two-way interaction between collective threat manipulation and participant race at least $\Delta R^2 = .014$ at 80% power.

Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to either the collective threat or control condition. The randomization procedure was stratified within participant race. Thus, the complete experimental design was a 2 (collective threat vs. control) x 2 (participant race: White vs. Asian) factorial design. Upon enrolling in the study, participants were told that the study examined their reactions to social situations and their worldviews. After providing informed consent, participants began the study by providing their Time 1 (T1) measures of collective self-esteem, trait self-esteem, and affect. Afterward, participants considered the vignette that manipulated whether a racial ingroup member behaved in a way that induced collective threat or not. After reading the vignette, participants answered the Time 2 (T2) dependent measures, manipulation check, and individual differences. Then, participants provided additional demographics and were debriefed and dismissed.

Materials

The collective threat manipulation was presented as a vignette (see Appendix). All participants learned that the target individual was invited to a racially diverse house party in college, where the target was one of the few members of their racial group. The vignette varied the race and the gender of the target to match participants' self-reported race and gender, which was collected at the start of the study.

The vignette manipulated whether an embarrassing action performed by participants' racial ingroup member was stereotypical of their racial group or not. In the control condition, participants learned that the target was trying to fit in by talking about politics. In this condition, the target was unable to talk about politics in a group setting. In response, another member of the party said, "That's just proof that most college students aren't politically active."

In the collective threat condition, the target was trying to fit in by dancing. This stereotype was selected because it is applicable to both racial groups. Previous research shows that White individuals are perceived as physically uncoordinated (Stone, 2002) and Asian individuals being perceived as socially unskilled or awkward (Lin, Kwan, Cheung, & Fiske, 2005). To increase the salience of collective threat, another member of the party said, "That's just proof that White/Asian people can't dance." While the control condition did not refer to anything related to a stereotype, the collective threat condition reinforced a negative stereotype about both racial groups. However, both conditions indicated that the target received social disapproval from others.

Measures

Dependent measures.

***Collective self-esteem*.** Using a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree)*, participants completed a total of 16 questions to indicate their attitudes toward their racial group

(Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). At T1, global collective self-esteem was measured with eight items (α = .72). After the manipulation, global collective self-esteem was again measured at T2 with the remaining eight items (α = .80).

Within each time point, two items (T1, α = .63, T2, α = .52) measured membership esteem (e.g., "I am a worthy member of the social group I belong to"); two items (T1, α = .53, T2, α = .68) measured public collective self-esteem (e.g., "Overall, my social groups are considered good by others"); two items (T1, α = .72, T2, α = .74) measured private collective self-esteem (e.g., "I often regret that I belong to some of the social group I do"); and two items (T1, α = .70, T2, α = .72) measured importance to identity (e.g., "Overall, my group memberships have very little to do with how I feel about myself").

For each measure of CSE (the global score and each of the four subcomponents), the T2 measure was subtracted from the T1 measure to compute a change score to reflect the effect of the manipulation on participants' CSE. Zero-order correlations between the subcomponents of the CSE scale are displayed in Table 1.

Trait self-esteem. Using a 4-point scale (1 = *strongly agree*, 4 = *strongly disagree*), participants completed five items (T1, α = .82, T2, α = .84) to indicate their level of trait self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965; e.g., "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself"). A change score was calculated by subtracting the T2 measure of trait self-esteem from the T1 measure of trait self-esteem.

Positive and negative affect. Using a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *extremely*), participants completed a total of 20 items to indicate their level of positive and negative affect (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). At T1, positive affect was measured with five items (e.g., "proud"; α = .86). After the manipulation, positive affect was again measured at T2 with the

Table 1. *Zero-order correlations between subcomponents of collective self-esteem (CSE) scale.*

Measure	1	2	3
1) Private CSE	-		
2) Public CSE	.06	-	
3) Membership CSE	.11*		-
4) Importance to identity CSE	.23**	.09*	.08

Note. Measures represent change scores (T2 – T1). $N = 517$. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

remaining five items (α = .81). Negative affect was also measured at T1 (α = .76). and T2 (α = .81) with five items each (e.g., “Scared”). A change score was calculated by subtracting the T2 measure of both negative and positive affect from the T1 measure of both positive and negative affect.

Individual differences.

***Need to belong*.** Using a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly agree*, 5 = *strongly disagree*), participants completed 10 items (α = .81) assessing their need to belong (e.g., "Being apart from my friends for long periods does not bother me"; Leary, Kelly, Cottrell, & Schreindorfer, 2013)

Asian American values. Using a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*), participants were asked 10 items (α = .83) about their affiliation and sense of identification of self-identity concerning Asian American values (e.g., “One should be able to brag about one’s achievements”; Kim, Li & Ng, 2005).

Individualism and collectivism. Using a 9-point scale (1 = *never or definitely no*, 9 = *always or definitely yes*), participants were asked 10 items about their identification with individualism and collectivism. Five items (α = .84) measured individualism (“I often do ‘my own thing’”; Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk & Gelfand, 1995) and five items (α = .60) measured collectivism (e.g., “The well-being of my co-workers is important to me”).

Manipulation check. To test the effectiveness of the manipulation, participants were asked to recall the scenario's social situation, including the name and the race of the target individual. Participants were also asked to explain what happened to the person to assess whether they recalled the target confirming a negative stereotype about their group or not.

Results

Descriptive statistics for all measures are displayed in Table 2. My primary hypothesis was that participants' race would moderate the effect of collective threat on different components of the collective self-esteem (CSE) scale. To test this, each dependent variable was entered into a 2 (collective threat: control vs. threat) x 2 (participant race: White vs. Asian) factorial ANOVA.

Manipulation Check

I first examined the effect of the collective threat manipulation on participants' positive and negative affect. I expected that participants in the collective threat condition would report more negative affect than those in the control condition. However, there was no statistically significant main effect of participant race, $F(1,513) = .002$, $p = .968$, or collective threat, $F(1, 513) = .996$, $p = .319$, on positive affect. Likewise, no significant main effect of participant race, $F(1, 513) = .028$, $p = .364$, or collective threat, $F(1,513) = .958$, $p = .095$, emerged on negative affect. Moreover, no significant interaction between participant race and the collective threat manipulation emerged for either negative affect, $F(1,513) = .1.53$, $p = .217$, or positive affect, $F(1, 513) = .064$, $p = .801$. In short, the collective threat manipulation did not increase participants' negative affect nor decrease their positive affect, calling into question whether participants felt threatened by the collective threat vignette.

Dependent Variables

CSE-Importance to Identity. I next examined the interaction between the collective threat manipulation and participant race on importance to identity CSE. However, no significant interaction emerged between participants' race and the collective threat manipulation on importance to identity CSE (see Table 3), $F(1, 513) = 1.156$, $p = .453$. This did not support my hypothesis that White participants who encounter a collective threat (vs. not) would show a decrease in importance to identity CSE.

Table 2. *Descriptive statistics for measures in Study 1.*

Measure	*M*	*SD*
CSE Membership (T2-T1)	-0.20	0.94
CSE Private (T2-T1)	-0.33	0.94
CSE Public (T2-T1)	0.03	1.15
CSE Identity (T2-T1)	0.07	1.06
Trait Self-Esteem (T2-T1)	-1.68	2.10
Positive Affect (T2-T1)	0.06	0.56
Negative Affect (T2-T1)	0.13	0.59
Need to Belong	4.61	0.78
AAV Collectivism	4.30	1.26
AAV Conformity to Norms	2.83	1.19
AAV Emotional Self-Control	2.83	1.32
AAV Family Recognition	4.38	1.20
AAV Humility	3.71	1.02
Individualism	5.21	0.77
Collectivism	4.30	0.84

Note. $N = 517$. CSE = collective self-esteem, AAV = Asian American Values.

Table 3. *Main effects of participant race, collective threat, and their respective interaction on dependent measures.*

	Participant Race			*Threat Manipulation*			*Interaction*		
Outcome	*F*	*df*	*p*	*F*	*df*	*p*	*F*	*df*	*p*
CSE (Global)	1.70	1, 513	.194	< 0.01	1, 513	.999	0.09	1, 513	.767
CSE-Private	2.11	1,513	.147	< 0.01	1, 513	.744	1.66	1, 513	.198
CSE-Public	0.21	1, 513	.893	2.65	1, 513	.104	2.65	1, 513	.453
CSE-Membership	9.92	1, 513	.002	2.07	1, 513	.151	2.40	1, 513	.122
CSE-Identity	1.42	1, 513	.234	0.05	1,513	.831	1.16	1, 513	.283
Trait Self-Esteem	14.55	1, 513	< .001	0.07	1, 513	.789	0.45	1, 513	.502
Positive Affect	< 0.01	1, 513	.965	1.00	1, 513	.319	0.06	1, 513	.801
Negative Affect	0.28	1, 513	.364	2.79	1, 513	.095	1.52	1, 513	.217

Table 4. *Group means and standard errors in Study 1.*

	White Participants		Asian Participants	
Outcome	Control	Threat	Control	Threat
CSE Private (T1)	4.92 (.09)	5.10 (.09)	5.77 (.19)	5.69 (.18)
CSE Private(T2)	4.62 (.08)	4.67 (.08)	5.48 (.18)	5.57 (.18)
CSE Public (T1)	4.92 (.09)	5.08 (.09)	5.77 (.19)	5.69 (.18)
CSE Public (T2)	4.62 (.08)	4.67 (.08)	5.48 (.18)	5.57 (.18)
CSE Membership (T1)	5.02 (.07)	5.10 (.07)	4.86 (.16)	4.74 (.15)
CSE Membership (T2)	4.76 (.07)	4.82 (.07)	4.77 (.16)	4.97 (.15)
CSE Identity (T1)	3.01 (.08)	2.80 (.08)	4.79 (.18)	4.94 (.18)
CSE Identity (T2)	3.02 (.09)	2.97 (.09)	4.79 (.20)	4.83 (.19)
CSE Global (T1)	4.34 (.06)	4.40 (.06)	5.02 (.12)	5.02 (.12)
CSE Global (T2)	4.23 (.59)	4.27 (.06)	4.97 (.13)	4.98 (.12)
Trait Self-Esteem (T1)	5.19 (.07)	5.13 (.07)	4.56 (.16)	4.69 (.15)
Trait Self-Esteem (T2)	3.31 (.08)	3.34 (.08)	3.74 (.17)	3.59 (.16)
Positive Affect (T1)	2.66 (.06)	2.67 (.06)	2.58 (.13)	2.43 (.13)
Positive Affect (T2)	2.76 (.06)	2.69 (.06)	2.67 (.12)	2.48 (.12)
Negative Affect (T1)	1.73 (.05)	1.63 (.05)	1.88 (.10)	1.66 (.10)
Negative Affect (T2)	1.83 (.05)	1.76 (.05)	1.96 (.12)	1.94 (.11)

Note. $N = 517$. Values indicate estimated marginal means and values in parentheses represent standard errors.

CSE-Public. I next tested the interaction between the collective threat manipulation and participant race on public CSE. However, I also did not find a statistically significant interaction between participants' race and the threat manipulation on public CSE (see Table 3), $F(1, 513) = 0.563$, $p = .453$. This did not support my second hypothesis that Asian participants who encounter a collective threat (vs. not) will show a decrease in public CSE.

CSE-Private. Next, I examined the interaction between the collective threat manipulation and participant race on private CSE. No significant interaction emerged between participants' race and the threat manipulation on private CSE (see Table 3), $F(1, 513) = 1.658$, $p = .217$. Therefore, I failed to provide evidence that being White American or South/ East Asian affected participants' level of private collective self-esteem after they encountered a collective threat.

CSE-Membership. I examined the interaction between the collective threat manipulation and participant race on membership CSE. However, no significant interaction emerged between the collective threat manipulation and participants' race on CSE membership, $F(1, 513) = 2.398$, $p = .122$. Therefore, I failed in providing evidence that being White American or South/ East Asian would affect participants' level of private collective self-esteem after they encountered a collective threat.

CSE-Global. I next tested whether participants' race interacted with the collective threat manipulation to shape global CSE. However, no significant interaction emerged, $F(1, 513) = 0.088$, $p = .767$.

Trait self-esteem. I also examined whether participants' race interacted with the collective threat manipulation to shape their trait self-esteem. Again, no significant interaction emerged between the effect of participants' race and collective threat on trait self-esteem, $F(1,$

513) = 0.452, p = .502. This result suggested that being White American or South/ East Asian did not affect participants' level of trait self-esteem after encountering a collective threat.

Exploratory Analyses: Individual Differences

In exploratory analyses, I examined whether individual differences moderated the hypothesized two-way interaction between participant race and collective self-esteem on the dependent measures. To test this, I used Hayes's (2018) Process model 3. I tested whether need to belong, individualism, or collectivism moderated the two-way interaction between participant race and CSE on each dependent measure. The results showed some statistically significant three-way interactions (see Table 5). However, a majority of these exploratory findings were not statistically significant, and the patterns of results were inconsistent, calling into question the reliability of these interactions.

General Discussion

This research examined whether individuals' cultural orientation moderated the effect of experiencing a collective threat on collective self-esteem (CSE). My primary hypothesis was that White Americans, who are more likely to endorse individualism, are more likely to decrease their “importance to identity" CSE following a collective threat compared to South and East Asian individuals. I also hypothesized that South and East Asians, who are more likely to endorse collectivist values, are more likely to decrease public CSE following collective threat relative to White Americans.

The results did not support either of my hypotheses. Regardless of participant race, witnessing a racial ingroup member engage in a stereotype-consistent action did not reduce collective self-esteem judgments relative to witnessing a racial ingroup member perform an embarrassing but not stereotypic action. These findings suggest that my manipulation did not

Table 5. *Three-way interactions between collective threat manipulation, participant race, and individual differences on dependent measures.*

	Need to belong			*Individualism*			*Collectivism*		
Outcome	*F*	*df*	*p*	*F*	*df*	*p*	*F*	*df*	*p*
CSE (Global)	0.19	1,509	.664	< 0.01	1,509	.995	1.83	1,509	.177
CSE-Private)	0.29	1,509	.590	3.04	1,509	.082	0.02	1,509	.902
CSE-Public)	0.64	1,509	.426	0.54	1,509	.463	0.14	1,509	.705
CSE-Membership	0.26	1,509	.609	0.04	1,509	.834	2.40	1,509	.122
CSE-Identity	0.80	1,509	.373	0.31	1,509	.580	0.89	1,509	.345
Trait Self-Esteem	4.90	1,509	.027	1.97	1,509	.161	0.02	1,509	.896
Positive Affect	0.70	1,509	.402	1.70	1,509	.193	0.31	1,509	.581
Negative Affect	4.43	1,509	.036	0.05	1,509	.823	2.24	1,509	.135

Note. For each individual difference, the statistical test reports the three-way interaction between the collective threat manipulation, participant race, and the individual difference.

change the extent to which participants viewed their racial group in a positive light. Furthermore, these results were not moderated by individual differences such as collectivism, individualism, or need to belong. In sum, my study did not provide evidence that witnessing a collective threat affected different components of CSE for either White or East and South Asian individuals.

Collective Self-Esteem

Previous research has studied how different components of the collective self-esteem scale vary as a function of people's race and ethnicity (e.g., Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, & Broadnax, 1994). However, my research is the first to examine how collective self-esteem is shaped by exposure to a collective threat, defined as a concern that an ingroup member's behavior will reinforce negative stereotypes about one's group (Cohen & Garcia, 2005).

Integrating research on collective self-esteem (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), cultural orientation (Oyserman et al., 2002), and social identity theory, I theorized that individuals' cultural background might shape how they perceive and respond to a collective threat. Given that White individuals tend to be lower ingroup identification and tend to endorse individualistic values, I hypothesized that they might be more likely than Asian individuals to reduce importance to identity after witnessing a collective threat to their racial group. However, my results did not support this hypothesis – White participants showed no change in any component of the CSE scale following exposure to an ingroup member who confirmed a negative stereotype about their racial group versus an ingroup member who performed an embarrassing, but not stereotypical, interaction.

I also hypothesized that, because Asian individuals tend to endorse collectivist values and tend to see themselves as connected with others, they would be more likely than White individuals to reduce public regard after witnessing a collective threat against their racial group.

However, my results did not support this hypothesis. After witnessing a racial ingroup member perform a stereotypical action, East and South Asian participants showed no change in any component of the collective self-esteem scale.

These findings may be related to subtyping and the "black sheep effect." When people encounter negative information about an ingroup member, they engage in various self-protective strategies to protect their ingroup's image. For example, participants can use ingroup derogation to protect the self-concept (Eidelman & Biernat, 2003). Likewise, participants can decrease the extent to which they see the deviant ingroup members as representative of their group (Marques, Yzerbyt, & Leyens, 1988). Although I did not measure evaluations of the ingroup member, such as perceived prototypicality, these results may explain why participants showed no changes in CSE following the collective threat; participants may have subtyped the ingroup member in the scenario or perceived them as a black sheep in order to protect their racial group's image. Therefore, the study would not detect a significant change in CSE encountering collective threat since participants managed the threat by derogating their ingroup member.

Limitations and Future Directions

One limitation of the study is the validity of my manipulation – the collective threat scenario. I designed the scenario to confirm stereotypes about White Americans being perceived as physically uncoordinated (Stone, 2002) and Asian individuals being perceived as lacking social skills (Lin, Kwan, Cheung, & Fiske, 2005). Although the threat manipulation aimed to pose a collective threat to the manipulated group, it is possible that the threat was not strong enough. In other words, my manipulation may not have induced collective threat among participants.

As a manipulation check, I examined whether the collective threat manipulation increased negative affect. However, my results only showed a marginal main effect of condition. Although the pattern of results was trending in the predicted direction, such that participants in the threat condition reported more negative affect than those in the control condition, it is entirely possible that the manipulation was not successful. Therefore, in future research, researchers can use a more valid manipulation or examine a domain that both groups find important to their self-concept. Also, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the study was completed online and remotely at a computer of the participant's choice. Although I did not find evidence of low-quality data, future researchers can examine these questions in a lab setting.

According to Crocker and Major (1989), people with negatively stereotyped identities may choose to base their self-worth on domains that are not negatively stereotyped. Thus, it is entirely possible that encountering a collective threat, instead of reinforcing the negative stereotyped image of their group, people choose to shift their focus to thinking about the positive aspects of their group's identity. In other words, participants may not stake their group's self-image on whether their group is seen as physically or socially skilled. Thus, future research can examine other stereotype content to examine how collective threats shape CSE.

One final consideration is whether people show immediate changes in CSE. Previous research has demonstrated reductions in CSE following threats to one's group identity (e.g., Jetten, Branscombe, & Spears, 2002). To conduct a sensitive test of my hypothesis, I measured participants' CSE immediately before and after the collective threat manipulation to detect within-participant changes in CSE, which accounts for individual differences in baseline levels of CSE (see Crocker et al., 1991 for a similar approach). Despite this methodology, my findings did not show any changes in CSE, suggesting that changing CSE may be difficult.

Conclusion and Implications

Although I failed to find cultural differences in the causal relationship between collective threat and collective self-esteem, this study did not reject the possibility that the relationship does exist. In-depth understanding and analysis of their relationships will bring new opportunities for social policy and international cooperation. It would provide us with more information about the concept of self and cultural-dependent behaviors under collective threat.

Appendix

Control Condition: Male Participant (White/South East Asian)

On homecoming weekend, Tyler/ Ming is invited to a house party by one of his Cuban friends. When Tyler/ Ming arrives at the party, he finds out that there are people from all over the world at the party and he was one of the few White people there. After spending time looking for his friends, he finally decides to get a drink and to find someone else to talk to. However, before he has time to make a drink, he overhears a conversation about politics. To fit in, Tyler/ Ming tries to join the conversation. However, he does not know much about politics and feels less knowledgeable than everyone else in the conversation. Suddenly, he realized that someone asked him a question and everyone was staring at him waiting for an answer. Without answering, he quickly made his way toward the other side of the room, but he overheard someone say, "That's just proof that most college students aren't politically active."

Threat Condition: Male Participant (White/South East Asian)

On homecoming weekend, your good friend Tyler/ Ming is invited to go to a house party by one of his Cuban friends. When he arrives at the party, he finds out that there are people from all over the world at the party and he was one of the few White people there. After spending time looking for his friends, he finally decides to get a drink and to find someone else to talk to. However, before he has time to make a drink, he hears music begin and everyone around him starts to dance. To fit in, Tyler/ Ming starts to dance as well. However, he is very uncoordinated and could not catch the rhythm of the song. No matter how hard he tried, his dancing felt awkward and out of step with everyone else. Suddenly, he realized that everyone around him was staring at him as he was trying to dance – he felt so embarrassed. As he quickly made his way toward the other side of the room, he overheard someone say, "That's just proof that White people can't dance."

Control Condition: Female Participant (White/South East Asian)

On homecoming weekend, Taylor/ Ling is invited to a house party by one of her Cuban friends. When Taylor/ Ling arrives at the party, she finds out that there are people from all over the world at the party and she was one of the few White people there. After spending time looking for her friends, she finally decides to get a drink and to find someone else to talk to. However, before she has time to make a drink, she overhears a conversation about politics. To fit in, Taylor/ Ling tries to join the conversation. However, she does not know much about politics and feels less knowledgeable than everyone else in the conversation. Suddenly, she realized that someone asked her a question and everyone was staring at her waiting for an answer. Without answering, she quickly made her way toward the other side of the room, but she overheard someone say, "That's just proof that most college students aren't politically active."

Threat Condition: Female Participant (White/South East Asian)

On homecoming weekend, your good friend Taylor/ Ling is invited to go to a house party by one of her Cuban friends. When she arrives at the party, she finds out that there are people from all over the world at the party and she was one of the few White people there. After spending time looking for her friends, she finally decides to get a drink and to find someone else to talk to. However, before she has time to make a drink, she hears music begin and everyone around her starts to dance. To fit in, Taylor/ Ling starts to dance as well. However, she is very uncoordinated and could not catch the rhythm of the song. No matter how hard she tried, her dancing felt awkward and out of step with everyone else. Suddenly, she realized that everyone around her was staring at her as she was trying to dance – she felt so embarrassed. As she quickly made her way toward the other side of the room, she overheard someone say, "That's just proof that White people can't dance."

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